

Human Services Committee  
September 27, 2018, 8 AM

**Attendance**

Beth Kerrigan, Chair  
Shari Cantor  
Mary Fay, (via telephone)  
Chris Barnes, (via telephone)  
Ben Wenograd (via telephone)

**Staff**

Matt Hart, Town Manager  
Helen Rubino-Turco, Social Services & Leisure Services Director  
Astrid Calderon, Social Services Manager  
Martha Church, Director, West Hartford Libraries  
Pramod Pradhan, West Hartford Libraries

**Invited Guests**

Judy Wyman Kelly, Human Rights Commission  
Barry Walters, Human Rights Commission

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Beth Kerrigan called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM
2. **Leisure Services Updates:**
  - a. Quick Updates were provided: summer pool program review will take place this fall. Cornerstone received a sizable donation of fitness equipment. Town continues to explore the LimeBike bike share program that Hartford is currently piloting.
  - b. Dog Park site is being considered with the Dog Park Coalition in an industrial area adjacent to the Trout Brook. Draft map distributed for review. Outreach to business and residential neighbors will be conducted in next few weeks by the DPC. If response is good, then proposal will be drafted and presented to proper zoning and Town committees.
  - c. Bond Commission Grant to Wolcott Park was announced. The grant of \$750,000 would help implement many park upgrades identified in the Wolcott Park Plan in 2016, including new restroom building, lighting infrastructure upgrades, new playscapes, new splash pad, renovated pathways and raised walkways, and newly designed parking lots.
  - d. Eversource at Vanderbilt Park. With DPW Director John Phillips, Helen met with over 40 neighbors of the Vanderbilt Park neighborhood to review Eversource's planned tree cutting and replanting design. Park improvements were also discussed. Some neighbors expressed interest in getting more involved in their local park.

- e. Other Park Projects include new playscapes at Beachland and the renovation of the Fernridge Park lower restroom to improve ADA accessibility.
- f. Westmoor Park as received recognition from the CT Bar Association's Environmental Law Section for its role in environmental education. Westmoor Park will host the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Feast on the Farm on Friday, September 28. Ticket still available.
- g. Celebrate West Hartford Committee announces that the event be held on June 1 and 2, 2019, to accommodate a major Jewish holiday the second weekend in June. The committee checked with numerous vendors and participants.

### 3. **Library Update**

- a. Open Position – Adult Services Manager due to the resignation of Amy McCue who has become the Director of the Granby Public Library. There are over 30 applicants for this key role as a member of the Library's operations team.
- b. Faxon Fun summer experience was offered for three sessions in July and early August at the Faxon Branch. Twenty-five elementary age children were registered for each of the first two sessions and younger teens attended session three. Activities focused on literacy and STEAM learning, and cooperative play. This program was funded through a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.
- c. Faxon Library Summer Lunch Program is in its second year. 1263 free lunches were served to children by WH School Nutrition Services staff as compared to only 300 lunch served last summer.
- d. Summer Reading enrollment for school-age children was double that of last summer. Library staff worked with school media specialists to enroll as many students as possible using the Wandoo online summer reading registration software made available at no cost by the CT State Library.
- e. The Weekend Food Backpack program organized by the Fern Street Food Pantry used the Noah Webster Library and the Faxon Library as pick-sites for families registered for this service over the summer. The libraries will continue as pick-up locations during the school year for families of middle and high school students as there is no school-based pick for that age group.
- f. Upcoming Library events:
  - Poet Billy Collins will speak at Town Hall Auditorium on October 4 at 7pm. This program is made possible by the West Hartford Library Foundation, Thomas Kilfoil Bequest.
  - The Kindness Project, a library program to collect toiletries for the West Hartford Food Pantry, will begin in October.
  - The Project Linus "Blanketeers" Group will debut in November at the Noah Webster Library. This will be a monthly social group for crafters who will make small blankets for children in need.

- The Noah Webster Library will be an enrollment site for Access Health CT during November and December.

#### 4. **Social Services Update**

- a. Police Training has resumed after a year's hiatus. Social workers conduct weekly, 30-minute training sessions at the WHPD to refresh the police force on social service protocols and programs. A drop box for prescription drugs will be installed in the WHPD lobby in October.
- b. Change in Holiday Program. Due to a drop in participation and subtle changes in the way families interact with social services, the children's party will be eliminated and replaced by staggered gift card distributions. Adopt-A-Family and other programs will continue.
- c. Dial A Ride is operating on budget. The provider's contract expires, so the service will be put out to bid later this fiscal year.
- d. Staffing – a new, part time social worker has been hired and will start in October. The vacant full-time social worker position has been posted. These new staff will help share the heavy work load of the department, which has risen steadily.
- e. Hoarding Lecture – Dr. David Tolin, a leading expert in the field of hoarding and cognitive behavioral therapy will speak on Thursday, October 11 at 6:30 PM in Town Hall.

#### 5. **Business Items**

- a. Sign regulations: An ordinance to allow limited signage in public parks and playfields was reviewed and approved. The ordinance was developed by Leisure Services, Town Planner and corporation counsel. Sponsorship signage has been requested for years by youth sports leagues. Leisure Services remains a careful steward of public land. Therefore, the ordinance is accompanied by restrictions tied to field permits issued to youth sports leagues. Next, the Town Council would receive the Committee's recommendation and refer the ordinance to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission for an opinion. It would be set for public hearing with the Town Council.
- b. Compassionate Communities Resolution: The committee endorsed the proposed resolution declaring the Town of West Hartford a Town of Compassion. The resolution will be placed on the October 9<sup>th</sup> Town Council agenda.

#### 6. **Adjournment:** Chairperson Kerrigan adjourned the meeting at 9:05 AM.